(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government of India agrees on the US warning against the Indo-Iran Pipeline; and

(d) if so, what steps Government would take to save the energy needs of the country?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) U.S. Energy Secretary, Samuel Bodman, during his visit to India on March 21-23, 2007, in talks with reporters was quoted as having said: "There has been conversation between India and other nations and Iran about finding ways of developing oil and gas assets and if that is allowed to go forward, in our judgement, this will contribute to development of nuclear weapons."

(c) and (d) Government of India's energy policy flows from our own assessments and requirements. India is pursuing several energy options and will continue to take any measures it deems necessary based on its own national interest.

Alternative route to Mount Kailash

4624. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:
SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:
SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal has been sent to China seeking an alternate route to Mount Kailash-Mansarover *via* Ladakh;

(b) if so, when it was sent and at what level it is being considered;

(c) whether this route would make the pilgrimage of Mount Kailash comparatively easier and ensure cost-effectiveness; and time-effectiveness; and

(d) whether this route would replace the existing route through Lipulekh pass through Kumaon region of Uttarakhand or both routes would continue to be used?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) The Government of India have discussed with China the issue of opening additional routes for pilgrims to Kailash-Mansarover since 1992. During the visit of President Hu Jintao of China from November 20 to 23, 2006, the two sides agreed to explore the possibility of opening an additional route. One of the additional routes proposed by Government is through Ladakh.

Iran Atomic Non-Proliferation Bill, 2007

†4625. SHRI MOTILAL VORA:
SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether consequent upon passing of Iran Atomic Non-Proliferation Bill, 2007 presented in the House of Representatives of America, the right of the American Administration to exempt to take stern action or to be imposed ban on the companies engaged in trade with Iran would come to an end; and

(b) if so, the effect of this bill on the Iran-Pak-Indo gas pipeline?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) A bill entitled the "Iran Counter-Proliferation Act of 2007 (HR 1400)" was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives on March 8, 2007. It seeks to "enhance United States diplomatic efforts with respect to Iran by imposing additional economic sanctions against Iran, and for other purposes." A similar bill has been introduced in the U.S. Senate.

(c) The bills are yet to be passed by both Houses of Congress. At this stage, it would be premature to comment on hypothetical implications of a bill whose passage and final version are not known.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.